

# KIPP:Healthy Schools

## SCHOOLWORKS QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

**KIPP Indianapolis College Preparatory**  
**November 5-7, 2013**



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## About the SchoolWorks Quality Review Process for KIPP

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The purpose of the SchoolWorks Quality Review (SQR) for KIPP is to serve as a formative review, supporting leaders in improving schools by assessing the school's current strengths and areas for improvement and helping the school prioritize its next steps. In addition to these school-specific purposes, the review also expands the capacity of KIPP staff and school leaders to use a common framework for discussing, evaluating and understanding school health as KIPP continues to expand.

The SQR for KIPP is also designed to streamline the school review process, including the Business/Operations review with the academic portion of the review. The Business/Operations review provides a high level evaluation of a school's operations that may identify areas for further review by the KIPP Foundation. Lastly, SQRs are a mechanism for ensuring quality across the network.

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### Leadership and Organizational Systems

- Inspirational leadership
- Academic leadership
- Organizational leadership
- Communications and relationship management
- Leader self-awareness
- Distributed Leadership

### Human Capital

- Leadership bench depth
- Staff recruitment and retention
- Staff characteristics
- Professional development
- Performance management

### Culture and Climate

- Values and expectations
- Motivation, commitment and satisfaction
- School environment

### Teaching and Learning

- Curriculum
- Instructional planning
- Lesson structure and execution
- Rigor and student engagement
- Student behavior management

### College Preparatory Supports

- Preparedness
- Placement and support

### Operations

- Financial health
  - Financial management
  - Business operations
  - Governance
  - Site Management
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The SQR utilizes multiple sources of evidence (documents, interviews, classroom visits) to understand how well a school is working. The evidence is collected and analyzed by a team of educators from SchoolWorks and KIPP over the course of several days in a school.

The final product of the SQR for KIPP is a written report, documenting the team's findings (strengths and areas for improvement), as well as recommendations for each of the six domains: Leadership and Organizational Systems, Human Capital, Culture and Climate, Teaching and Learning, College Preparatory Supports and Operations. The final page of the report is used to record the discussion between the team and the school during the prioritization process.

Following is a detailed description of each section.

<b>Strengths:</b>	Strengths are used to identify programs, practices and operations that are working well. Strengths identified by the SQR team are based on evidence collected during the visit.
<b>Areas for Improvement:</b>	Areas for improvement identify practices and operations that may need attention to better serve students and/or the school program. Areas for improvement identified by the SQR team are based on evidence collected during the visit.
<b>Recommendations:</b>	This section includes suggestions generated by the SQR team for addressing identified improvement areas. The assumption is not that the school will address every recommendation or that they will attempt to address all of the recommendations at once. Some recommendations may be better addressed in the future.
<b>Prioritization Process:</b>	This is a working section that is developed collaboratively on the third day of the review. The school and team prioritize areas for improvement to develop a focused plan with maximum impact within the available resources.

As a charter school sponsored by the Mayor's Office, KIPP Indianapolis College Preparatory (KIPP Indianapolis) is subject to high levels of accountability in exchange for autonomy over school programs. The Mayor's accountability system centers on the *Performance Framework*. The framework serves two purposes:

1. To inform the Mayor's ongoing oversight, and
2. To help each school continually assess and improve its performance.

The *Performance Framework* provides a foundation of common and school-specific evaluation elements for all Mayor-sponsored charter schools. The *Performance Framework* is organized around four key questions:

- Is the educational program a success?
- Is the organization effective and well-run?
- Is the school meeting its operations and access obligations?
- Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?

The Mayor's Office uses multiple methods to gather information related to school performance; the information gathered informs evaluations relative to the *Performance Framework*. In addition to the vast array of information gathered by the Mayor's Office, schools are responsible for contracting with Mayor-approved site visit evaluators to conduct site visits at designated times during the term of the charter.

In the fall of 2013, KIPP Indianapolis contracted with SchoolWorks, LLC to generate an additional report for the Mayor's Office following its KIPP Foundation-sponsored School Quality Review (SQR). As noted above, the SQR for KIPP is designed as a formative review, with a goal of supporting school leaders in their school improvement efforts. SchoolWorks is an education consulting company whose mission is to advance all aspects of student learning by building the capacity of educators and educational institutions to assess, plan for, and achieve student success. SchoolWorks has national experience in developing SQR processes that match the unique needs and objectives of state departments of education, districts, foundations, educational management organizations (EMOs) and charter management organizations (CMOs).

The SQR for KIPP is guided by a protocol aligned with KIPP's Healthy Schools framework. The Healthy Schools framework consists of two key components: Student Outcomes and Leading Indicators. The outcomes describe the results, and the leading indicators describe the input and processes that impact the outcomes. The Healthy Schools Leading Indicators are used as the criteria for the SQR. This helps KIPP and its schools understand how effectively these indicators can be used to understand the inputs in relation to the outcomes.

In order to provide a lens for collecting evidence to understand school programs, practices and operations, the Healthy Schools Leading Indicators were further defined. For each of the six leading indicators/domains, criteria were developed on the basis of research for effective school practices. This work was done by SchoolWorks in collaboration with KIPP. The leading indicators address six domains of school practice: Leadership and Organizational Systems, Human Capital, Culture and Climate, Teaching and Learning, College Preparatory Supports, and Operations.

The SQR utilizes multiple sources of evidence (documents, interviews, classroom visits) to understand how well a school is working in relation to sub-indicators for each key question. The evidence is collected and analyzed by a team of educators from SchoolWorks and KIPP over the course of two days in a school. The final product of the SQR for KIPP is a written report, documenting the team's findings (commendations and areas for attention) for each sub-indicator.

- **Strengths** are used to identify programs, practices, and operations that are working well.
- **Areas for attention** identify practices and operations that may need attention to better serve students and/or the school program.

Strengths and areas for attention identified by the site visit team are based on evidence collected during the visit.

The following pages identify commendations and areas for attention identified during the SQR, along with the supplemental indicators requested by KIPP Indianapolis for the purpose of completing the Mayor's Office *Performance Framework*.

#### **4.1: Does the school have a high quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?**

**Rating: Meets Standard**

##### **Strength**

**The school is developing a high quality curriculum and has systems and structures to ensure consistency.**

- The curriculum aligns with state standards and is moving toward alignment to the common core standards. In focus groups, school leaders and teachers reported that curriculum materials and plans are aligned to a combination of Indiana state standards and Common Core standards. This was confirmed by a review of curricular documents provided to the site visit team. Teachers and leaders reported that curricular materials are housed on a shared computer drive, which can be accessed by staff. In focus groups, stakeholders reported that the school holds an expectation for posting daily objectives in classrooms; this was observed by the site visit team, who noted that classrooms often had multiple objectives listed for a day's lesson. In focus groups, teachers reported that the school provides them a guideline for "what" to teach, but provides freedom in "how" they teach it.
- The staff understand and use curriculum documents and related program materials to deliver instruction. A review of school documents indicated that teachers follow a common format for weekly plans that include each day's standards, objectives, agenda, and mini-lesson description. Daily lesson plans varied slightly in their format, but included similar components, including instructional strategies such as the hook, introduction to new material, and independent practice. In focus groups, teachers reported that the school holds a set of standardized expectations for unit and weekly plans, and that teachers who are new to the school submit daily lesson plans for review by the Department Chair or Director of Curriculum.

##### **Area for Attention**

**The site visit team did not find significant areas for attention in sub-question 4.1 that rose to the level of a finding during the SQR for KIPP Indianapolis.**

#### **4.2: Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?**

##### **Rating: Does Not Meet Standard**

##### **Strength**

**The site visit team did not find significant areas of strength in sub-question 4.2 that rose to the level of a finding during the SQR for KIPP Indianapolis.**

##### **Area for Attention**

**Instruction does not address varied student learning needs nor consistently require students to think critically.**

- Instruction and activities are not differentiated. Teachers differentiated teaching strategies, styles, and activities, accommodating various learning needs through use of visuals and manipulatives in 22% of observed classrooms. In one classroom, students were given a choice-or-challenge mathematics question for early finishers. The most common form of differentiation, if implemented, was a computer visual on the board. However, in most classrooms, no differentiation was observed. Teachers differentiated product or performance (e.g., a choice of alternatives to accommodate students' academic needs, learning styles, and/or interests) in 9% of observed classrooms. In one classroom, students gave different presentations based on their strengths. In most classrooms, however, teachers were not observed differentiating product or performance expectations. While English language arts (ELA) teachers reported using leveled reading books during reader's workshop, the site visit team observed a student reading a store catalog and many others simply not reading at all. Also, teacher-student conferences observed during classes focused on student behavior, rather than content.
- Instruction does not incorporate specific interventions for students who are struggling, nor does it challenge students with higher skill levels. In focus groups, teachers reported (and special education teachers confirmed) that they do not differentiate or provide modifications and accommodations required by Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Teachers also reported that students with the highest needs (all special education students) are grouped together in a single class. The administration stated that to make up for this, they grouped the highest level students in the same class, making it difficult to effectively serve the wide variety of skills. One teacher stated that as a result, "I'm just teaching to the middle and that doesn't serve anyone." This sentiment was echoed by teachers across focus groups. The leadership team described the implementation of success block to address the needs of struggling students, while challenging high performing students. As mentioned earlier, teachers reported that – due to technology problems – this time was an ineffective start of the day and that teachers simply chose what classwork to provide without considering student data or performance. The site visit team observed groups in which students with access to computers chose what activities they wanted to do with no apparent direction or focus.
- Students are not required to sweat in classes by engaging in high-level learning. Teachers' questions and classroom activities required students to engage in application or analysis in 20% of classrooms observed. In one class, the teacher asked students to recall the names of continents. In another class, after students completed their exams, site visit team members noted some early finishers drawing pictures. In most classes, teachers did not engage students in tasks requiring more than basic knowledge or comprehension. Students explained and/or defended their answers (even when correct) in 13% of observed classrooms. In one classroom, a teacher explained what the answer was instead of asking students to explain. In most classes, if the teacher asked students to clarify or explain their thinking, they did not insist on all-the-way correct responses, or students did not provide any additional explanation or clarification. For example, in one classroom, a student gave an incorrect answer. The teacher then asked the student to explain, but the student fell silent, and the teacher then moved on. In another classroom, students provided only one-word answers. Leaders acknowledged that even though requiring students to sweat was a school-wide goal, there was still much work to be done.

#### 4.4: Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?

##### Rating: Approaching Standard

##### Strength

##### Data inform organizational decision making and ongoing school improvement planning.

- School staff regularly use academic achievement and perception data to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The regional leadership team reported that the school uses the nationally norm-referenced Northwest Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) and Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP) data to determine school-wide academic goals and priorities. School leaders confirmed this by describing how an analysis of student MAP data led to the implementation of the success block in which students work in small, targeted groups for remediation or enrichment. Leaders reported (and teachers confirmed) that ELA and mathematics teachers analyze student quiz or benchmark data biweekly during department meetings. The site visit team also observed charts tracking student progress in classrooms, although most of these charts tracked the number of pages students read during independent reading. School staff use school process and perception data to assess effectiveness of school practices and programs. As described in the school's Strategic Imperatives document, the school administers the Health Schools & Regions (HSR) staff surveys and quarterly teamwork surveys to gauge staff satisfaction. Teachers, as well as school and regional leaders, confirmed that these staff surveys are administered. The most recent survey revealed the school's discipline system as the biggest area of growth. Leaders responded to these results by giving a follow-up survey requesting additional written feedback. Leaders described that the assistant school leader distributed behavior data (such as the number of paycheck dollars earned and deducted by individual teachers) to seventh and eighth grade teachers for analysis in grade-level meetings to address teacher frustrations around inconsistencies in the implementation of the behavior system. Many teachers, however, reported not knowing what leadership did with staff survey data or feedback.

##### Area for Attention

##### Data do not effectively drive instruction or interventions for students.

- School staff do not use student achievement data to inform student interventions and differentiation. Although the principal reported using MAP results to establish an instructional focus for students during success block, teachers reported that – due to technology challenges that limited their ability to deliver appropriately-leveled computer-based programming to students – most students were not receiving appropriate interventions or differentiation. The site visit team observed (and teachers confirmed) that most staff did not use student data for planning instruction for success blocks. While the principal stated that classroom teachers monitored progress of special education students quarterly by examining trends in homework and classwork completion, participation, MAP data, and other student data, special education teachers reported that classroom teachers were not familiar with progress monitoring tools for gathering data on students. Special education teachers also reported that the school had no clear response to intervention (RtI) process; they were not certain how to identify students for RtI, which interventions to provide, or how to assess those interventions. Additionally, school leaders acknowledged that the special education department was struggling to develop and implement effective procedures and protocols to assess and monitor students receiving special education services for compliance, particularly outside of the pull-out classrooms. When asked how they used data in their classrooms, ELA teachers mentioned the use of benchmark and MAP assessments. They primarily cited tracking the number of pages students had read and pointed to classroom contests for whom had read the most number of pages during reader's workshop.
- Assessments and checking for understanding (CFU) are not consistently used to adjust instruction. Teachers checked for understanding using a variety of whole-group strategies (e.g., choral response, quick-write, quizzes, clickers, white boards, exit tickets) in only 22% of observed classrooms (n=23). For example, site visit



team members noted that in one classroom, when a teacher asked for a whole group response, many students did not participate. In another classroom, the CFU consisted of the teacher simply asking if anyone had any questions. In most observed classrooms, no CFU were noted. Relatedly, teachers immediately used data from CFUs to correct misconceptions (by adjusting the delivery, pace, content, or organization) in just 26% of observed classrooms. In one classroom, a teacher had students repeat a clean-stop exercise four times until mastery was perceived. In most classrooms, however, teachers were not observed immediately using data from CFUs. In fact, when teachers were asked how they used data to inform daily instruction, they cited only exit tickets as an example; also, teachers noted that this practice was not consistent across all classrooms. Some teachers reported building time for review of exit tickets into upcoming classes in order to address re-teaching needs. However, they also noted that if unit tests revealed poor understanding of content, the sequence of units did not allow them to go back and re-teach those concepts.

#### **4.5: Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?**

##### **Rating: Approaching Standard**

##### **Strength**

##### **The school has developed and implemented systems to support, manage, and evaluate staff members.**

- Most staff members are managed and supported by a clearly-identified point person. In focus groups, leaders and teachers noted that teachers know to whom to report and whom to solicit for guidance and support. For behavioral needs, assistant school leaders support teachers. For academic needs, the mentor teacher (who often also serves as department chair) serves as the point person. Teachers reported that a weekly one-on-one (O3) structure was in place for them to meet with mentor teachers. Review of department meeting agendas showed that department chairs create and manage agendas that are clear, rigorous, and purposeful. For example, each agenda item included targeted outcomes that reflected the needs of the group, and the department chair requested feedback for the meeting. Teachers reported using the feedback of mentor teachers or assistant school leaders frequently. Of note, however, some special education and KIPP Through College (KTC) staff reported that there were no clear management structures, systems, or routines to support their departments.
- Contact between managers and staff members is frequent, structured, and consistent across the school. Review of the school's Strategic Imperatives showed that a goal for the 2013-14 school year was to have all staff members receive regular O3s; according to leaders and teachers, this goal is being met. On the leadership team, regional leaders reported having weekly O3s with the school leader; the school leader, in addition to weekly leadership meetings, has weekly O3s with each assistant school leader. Across the school, weekly O3s take place at all staff levels: grade-level team leaders meet with assistant school leaders; teachers meet with mentor teachers; mentor teachers meet with the director of curriculum; and departments meet weekly. Teachers indicated that, this year, in the new O3 structure with mentor teachers, they share classroom success and brainstorm around a problem. They reported that these weekly meetings took place as scheduled, and that advanced preparation was required for each meeting. Leaders also described improved weekly email communication through the Monday Memo that consistently addresses a consistent structure of celebrating success, tactical items, next steps, and an overview for the coming week. The site visit team also observed a 15-minute meeting that occurs every morning with the entire staff to announce any logistical information to ensure school-wide consistency.
- Feedback is provided through systematic processes (both formal and informal) to ensure oversight of instruction and classroom practices. Teachers and leaders reported the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) evaluation system as the main vehicle for instructional feedback. Leaders described that four formal TAP observations take place each year – two announced and two unannounced. Following observations, teachers then score themselves and evaluators score teachers based on the TAP rubric. Evaluators, who serve as mentor teachers, must all receive training. Teachers and mentors meet weekly in cluster groups for professional development. Review of TAP Instructional Plan documents showed that mentors follow a post-observation script to prompt teachers to identify what to improve and refine, and to provide concrete suggestions for improvement. In addition to TAP, teachers reported that they receive feedback on unit and lesson plans weekly. Most teachers are expected to turn in lesson plans to their mentor teacher every Friday, and unit plans before the start of each unit, for review. Teachers, however, expressed a sense of ambiguity regarding who was, or who was not, required to turn in weekly lesson plans.

##### **Area for Attention**

##### **Staff professional development does not provide strategic, aligned opportunities for growth and learning.**

- Training and orientation for new KIPP staff does not provide adequate orientation to the school and the job. In focus groups, teachers described being overwhelmed with information during the two-week summer professional development. Teachers stated that they would have preferred to have more time to plan

and set up classrooms. Review of the summer staff onboarding schedule showed a total of two afternoons and one working lunch devoted to individual work time throughout the two weeks – although the two afternoons were coupled with grade-level meetings and home visits. New KIPP staff members stated that they had only one morning on the first day for training targeted to their specific needs. Review of HSR data showed that one of the five most negative shifts between 2011-12 and 2012-13 was a poor rating on the indicator, “New staff are given adequate orientation to the school and their jobs.”

- Professional development is not strategically designed to improve individual and school performance. In focus groups, regional leaders reported that professional development did not have a clear, overarching focus; it seemed more reactive and less aligned to the year-long priorities. For example, professional development days were devoted to dealing with how to use the Student Information System (SIS), rather than aligned to the focus of student achievement. Review of professional development schedules for this year confirmed a lack of an overarching goal or focus. For example, one-and-one-half hours were devoted to team building, and school and regional updates; afternoons focused on training on copier machines, or health insurance updates, or grade level meetings (which teachers and leaders described as tactical and logistical in nature). Although leaders described TAP as the vehicle for improving teacher performance, teachers reported that they felt topics covered in TAP cluster groups were not urgent or aligned to the needs of the teachers. Although teachers appreciated the focused time and reflection, some teachers stated that the expectation to implement a new teaching strategy immediately was overwhelming because teachers felt unsupported

#### **4.6: Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?**

**Rating: Exceeds Standard**

##### **Strength**

**Stakeholders share an understanding of, and commitment to, the mission, vision, and values of the school.**

- Stakeholders can articulate the mission, vision, and core values. As stated in the Team and Family Handbook, the mission of the school is to go above and beyond to prepare students for college and life success through character building and academic rigor. In focus groups, leaders, teachers, parents, and students reiterated the school's mission as college preparation and completion. Specifically, the principal described the school's mission as having an emphasis on character building and being a highly rigorous, college preparatory school of choice; teachers stated the mission as preparing students to enter and complete college. Parents also reported that the mission is to ensure that children are successful up until and through college; students echoed the high expectations and described the school's mission to prepare students to be college-ready through performing above and beyond expectations. Stakeholders also described a common understanding of the school's values. In focus groups, teachers listed the four core values – grit, citizenship, optimism, and integrity – and noted that these were consistent across all content areas and grade levels. The site visit team observed hallway displays steeped with the school's mission, vision, and values. For example, the main entrance foyer displayed a bulletin board celebrating alumni in college. A list of the current colleges attended by alumni (with a spotlight on a 2012 alumna attending Purdue University) reinforced the school's mission. An adjacent bulletin board explained the four KIPP values.
- School programs and activities reflect the school's mission, vision, and values. Review of the Team and Family Handbook indicated that the school-wide behavior management system (or the paycheck system) was "...centered on maintaining the school's core values." School leaders explained how this paycheck system was directly tied to the school's core values. Students earn dollars on their paycheck for exhibiting the core values of grit, citizenship, optimism, and integrity. For example, the site visit team observed a student who earned a dollar for showing academic grit by not giving up on a challenging classwork assignment. Leaders described implementing rigorous curriculum in eighth grade mathematics (algebra) and science (integrated chemistry and physics, or ICP) to drive the school's academic program toward college readiness. The principal stated that the goal of success block (a 30-minute period at the start of each day in which students work in small groups targeted to meet their specific needs) was to prepare students for college. For example, higher-performing students work on enrichment, such as Odyssey of the Mind – a rigorous and nationwide creative problem-solving competition. The school's mission is emphasized by the principal in weekly emails or Monday Memos to staff; she highlights a specific event or vignette from the previous week that illustrates adherence to the mission. Teachers also described the annual Promise Ceremony event as further commitment to the school's mission. Staff, families, and students gather at the Promise Ceremony and explicitly make a commitment to each other to ensure that students enter and complete college.

##### **Area for Attention**

**The site visit team did not find significant areas for attention in sub-question 4.6 that rose to the level of a finding during the SQR for KIPP Indianapolis.**

#### 4.7: Is the school's climate conducive to student and staff success?

##### Rating: Approaching Standard

##### Strengths

##### **The school has a clear plan to manage and promote positive student behavior.**

- The school's behavioral expectations are clearly communicated. Review of the school's Team and Family Handbook demonstrated a clearly-communicated behavior policy based on a paycheck plan. For example, the handbook detailed how students can lose KIPP dollars with a list of infractions such as horseplay, classroom disturbance, and profanity. The handbook also detailed possible consequences, such as recess detention for fifth or sixth grade students if they lose \$3 or more in the morning or previous afternoon. In focus groups, parents described the paycheck system and demonstrated a clear understanding of the school's behavioral expectations. Leaders described the paycheck system associated with 15 targeted behaviors, with seven categories resulting in a loss of KIPP dollars, three categories earning dollars, and five categories either earning or losing dollars, depending on the behavior. The assistant principal stated that negative behaviors are very targeted and specific, while positive behaviors are more general so students have more opportunities to earn KIPP dollars.

##### **The school is beginning to support students in planning their future education.**

- Students and families are supported in selecting appropriate high school placements and making the transition to high school. In focus groups, students reported receiving assistance through the KTC coordinator who helps match their interests with appropriate high schools. KTC staff confirmed that they carefully consider various factors when assisting students to select appropriate high school placements, such as academic level, personal interests, and parents' lists of non-negotiables (e.g., distance, transportation). Parents reported that the school has strong relationships with high-caliber private schools in the area. Review of the school's Strategic Imperatives indicated mandatory family attendance for the annual high school fair and high school placement meeting. The school also facilitates information sessions for high school partners and markets open houses to students. For example, a bulletin board prominently spotlighted Cristo Rey High School. Staff also reported that the school has a plan for supporting current eighth grade students who are not accepted to college preparatory high schools to ensure that their transition to high school is successful. For example, eighth grade students will be clustered into groups that attend the same high school (modeled after The Posse Foundation's successful college clusters for low-income high school graduates), while the KTC staff supports the cluster to take college preparatory courses outside of school. Additionally, the school has made strategic efforts to keep students clustered in high schools to provide greater support throughout high school.
- Students are supported in preparing for placement and/or entrance exams. In focus groups, students, families, leaders, and teachers reported that students prepare for placement or entrance exams during each morning's success block. Parents also reported that the success block is focused on exam preparation. KTC staff stated that, since vocabulary has been the greatest challenge for students on placement exams, success block focused on vocabulary acquisition. The site visit team also noted posters displayed around the school with high school placement exam sign-up forms. Review of the school's Strategic Imperatives demonstrated that the school is working to secure itself as a Secondary School Admissions Test (SSAT) test site. In addition, the school partners with Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School – an elite college preparatory school – to offer exam preparation workshops for seventh grade students.

##### Area for Attention

##### **The school's plan to manage and promote positive student behavior is not effectively implemented.**

- Staff do not consistently implement consequences for misbehavior. Students behaved according to rules and expectations in just 52% of classrooms observed. In one classroom, students were talking, making noises, and stood up to check cellphones. In another classroom, a student stormed out of the room. Teachers reacted with speed and decisiveness when behavior did not meet expectations, using redirection, consequences connected to school's system, or individual conversations

in only 48% of observed classrooms. In one classroom, a teacher repeatedly asked students to stop talking or calling out by counting down from five to zero, or stating that students were talking out of turn, but the site visit team did not observe any consequences or dollars deducted. In many classes, students repeatedly received reminders to follow directions, but teachers did not issue consequences. In focus groups, teachers and leaders agreed that implementation of the behavior system was inconsistent. Teachers reported that the issuing of consequences depended on individuals' personalities and whether the teacher was having a good or bad day. Teachers also reported that consequences were not always appropriate for the misbehavior. For example, when students exhibited egregious misbehavior, school leaders only spoke to them rather than suspend them.

- Students do not consistently demonstrate the KIPP values through words and actions. In focus groups, students reported that students do not respect teachers and that students frequently use profanity with one another in classrooms. The site visit team observed students using profanity and not consistently upholding school values in the classroom. For example, students rolled their eyes and sucked their teeth in front of and behind teachers' backs when in disagreement. Teachers reported that they sometimes feel they are lowering standards for behavior, and noted that there are some serious behaviors that continue to go unaddressed.

#### **4.8: Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?**

##### **Rating: Meets Standard**

##### **Strength**

##### **The school engages families.**

- School staff communicate frequently with families. According to school policy, as outlined in the Team and Family Handbook and confirmed by all stakeholders, the school communicates with families through multiple avenues. Specifically, the school uses a weekly paycheck system for classroom management, as well as communication with families about student behavior and attendance. In focus groups, school leaders reported that families of fifth and sixth grade students must sign the paycheck weekly; the families of seventh and eighth grade students receive the paycheck, but are not required to sign and return it. A review of sample paychecks showed that the document includes the weekly dollar balance, including specifics of dollars earned and lost and during which class period, overall bank account total, and the historic trend of the last five paychecks. Additionally, teachers reported (and the Team and Family Handbook confirmed) that leadership requires parent conferences when students receive multiple assignments to detention (which the school calls Making Better Choices, or MBC). The school communicates with parents on a regular basis concerning students' academic standing in both formal and informal ways. Leaders and parents reported that progress reports are sent out every other week, and report cards are made available on a quarterly basis. In focus groups, teachers stated they were expected to call home every week to discuss any barriers to student success; parents reported that school staff reach out when their children are doing well and making improvements. Parents also reported they can contact teachers by telephone, text, in person, and through email. Furthermore, leadership noted (and parents confirmed) that monthly newsletters are sent home and include the school calendar, upcoming events, and spotlights on student achievement. Finally, school leadership reported they conduct autodial announcements for important events and call home every time a student is absent.
- Families feel welcome at the school and are encouraged to participate in school activities and functions. In focus groups, parents stated (and the Team and Family Handbook confirmed) that parents are expected to attend conferences following report cards each quarter. Parents also cited an open door policy that encourages them to sit in on classes; they feel they can pop in any time. Parents stated that teachers are receptive, open, and genuinely care about students. Additionally, leadership reported that the KIPP Indiana Parent Association (KIPA) was more engaged than in 2011-12, and was now led by a core group of three-to-four parents. KIPA has organized multiple events, including a Passionately Pink Day to promote breast cancer awareness, a Halloween dance, and a movie night. Finally, the site visit team observed some parents volunteering their time by helping at the front desk.

##### **Area for Attention**

**The site visit team did not find significant areas for attention in sub-question 4.8 that rose to the level of a finding during the SQR for KIPP Indianapolis.**

## **Appendix A: School Quality Review Team**

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The SQR to the KIPP Indianapolis College Preparatory School was conducted on November 5-7, 2013 by a team of educators from SchoolWorks LLC and KIPP.

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